



Cambridge MARKETS Chronicle by Mike Petty

1885

1885

New Cattle Market opened [NI.1.6]

1888

1888 03 02

Agitation for covered market at Cambridge [1.17]

1889

1889 02 15

Royal Commission on Market Rates & Tolls enquiry [1.18]

1897

1897 04 24

A memorial from certain inhabitants of the Cambridge in favour of covering the Market Hill with a permanent covering of iron and glass was read by the Town Clerk. Coun Nichols thought the state of their present market was a disgrace to civilisation. They were paying at least £400 a year for putting up and taking down those wretched wooden structures and the cloths that covered them were of no use whatever. Mr F. Morley did not believe in the Corporation entering into competition with the shopkeepers of the town and driving the trade into the hand of people who paid no rates. Mr Campkin felt the question of a covered market elsewhere was too serious a matter for them to consider for many years to come. (The council voted against the proposal 97 04 24

1897 12 11 c

Cambridge Market Committee recommended that a new form of market stall known as the "Diamond Stall" be erected on Market Hill. Mr Nichols remarked that the long vexed question of covering in the market was the objection to a permanent structure being erected on Market Hill. They were paying now £850 per year for putting up and taking down all those wretched stalls and their repairs. At some length he described the advantages to the town that the scheme would bring about, amid some manifestations of impatience on the part of the Council c1897 12 11

1900

1900 08 22

In 1885 a large cattle market was erected & shortly after some buildings were erected for providing refreshment for those who required it. These were very small & now the Star Brewery wished to erect a commodious hotel with 10 bedrooms which would be used to put up those who came to the market to buy cattle. At the present there was no accommodation for Irishmen attending the market. Many come on Friday night with their stock & it was necessary for them to be constantly attending to them. It would be put a considerable way back from the road and have space for 50 to 70 horses. The nearest hotel was the Great Northern but it had only a few beds so they had to go to the Red Lion in Petty Cury. CDN 1900 08 22

1901

1901 08 21

The Star Brewery renewed its application for a proposed new hotel on the Hills Road, adjacent to Cambridge Cattle Market. There were farmers, dealers in cattle coming from Norwich and Essex who regularly attended the market, coming by train. It was desirable that they should sleep on the spot and take care of the cattle. Mr Grain said there was opposition from Homerton College, a ladies college. What on earth they opposed for he did not know. None of those young ladies, he was sure, would go near a public house. CDN 1901 08 21

1908

1908 11 13

A singular accident in which a taximeter cab played a singular part occurred in Peas Hill. The lamp of taxi cab number 214, driven by a man named Darby, caught the awning connecting a couple of stalls and there was a general upset. The stall of Mr Reynolds was practically demolished and the sweets strewn about with the result that a number of boys had a scramble and pocketed as much as they could. The adjoining drapery stall of Mr Nicholls fared better. The affair caused a great deal of commotion CWN 08 11 13

1909

1909 07 09

There had been an outcry after Cambridge Corporation destroyed eight tenements when improving Northampton Street. Now they wanted to erect houses for persons of the working class on land in Albion Row, Lady Margaret Road and the Haymarket. Some would be on the site of the old cattle market. This had previously been moved to St Andrew's Hill, then in 1842 to Pound Hill and in 1887 to its present site near the railway station, an Inspector was told CWN 09 07 09

1909 11 26

Councillors considered a police report on the auctioneers or cheap-jacks who visit Cambridge Market Hill on Saturday evenings and the Peas Hill in daytime with 'mock' jewellery. It was agreed such persons be not allowed and that in future 'Hoop-la' stalls be not allowed on Market Hill. A suggestion from the Cambridge University Automobile Club as to the placing of mirrors at the Bridge Street end of Jesus Lane was rejected. Drains in City Road and Eden Street were a nuisance and injurious to health, owners should do the necessary work or it will be done by the Surveyor and charged to them CWN 09 11 26

1911

1911

Number of stalls reduced by 62 from 250 & roads around square widened [1.24]

1911 01 13

Stall holders on Cambridge Market have been troubled by repeated small thefts. The elusive genius of the pilfering urchin is well known but Cambridge boys have resorted to other devices. One favourite plan is for two boys to walk past and for one to throw the other's cap on the stall. In recovering the cap the boy generally manages to get an orange or two underneath it. Another is for a boy to have a piece of wood with a nail on the end and to spike an apple or other fruit with it. The police have been keeping a sharp look-out with the result that a lad of 14 was arrested for stealing nougat from Mr Careless's sweet stall. 11 01 13g

1912 09 13

Sir - Cambridge fruit costs more on Cambridge market than in London since most cannot be sold locally at any price and is sent to larger towns. Good apples from Histon sold in Manchester for a shilling per half bushel. But expenses consumed 10d and the grower got only 2d. In his own market the grower tries to sell at remunerative prices. The only people who can sell cheaper than market traders are the hawkers. There are dozens of large lorries that hawk all over Cambridge and pay not one penny towards the expenses of the town. Yet market stallholders have to pay a very heavy toll – John Hall 12 09 13f

1919

1919 08 20

Open mart for sale of fruit and vegetables under auspices of Cambs Fruit and Vegetable Society in Bridge Street; first auction – 19 08 20h

1919 09 03

Sale of army horses at Cattle Market. The present shed was erected in 1908; Grain & Son increasing their horse sale but object to them allowing purchasers to try horses and mules in harness on Sundays – 19 09 03a

1926

1926 10 30

Cambridge Borough Surveyor submitted four schemes for the lay-out of land at the Cattle Market. The site comprised 11½ acres and was purchased about 1884 from Jesus College. The west side was used for vehicles of those attending the market, the east side was partly used for allotments and the question had arisen of developing part for conveniences, a free library and an abattoir, which was most important. The Railway Company wanted to provide up and down platforms at the station. It was unlikely the bridge would be widened for railway traffic was decreasing 26 10 11

1928

1928 01 10

An inquiry was held into proposals to alter the charges for stalls on Cambridge market. There were 112 stalls, 64 of which were interior stalls but some, particularly those at the four corners of the market were more valuable than others. The present charge was 2s. 6d. per day and it was proposed to increase it to 6s. 10s for corner stalls, with frontage stalls increased to 4s. 8d and the interior stalls raised to 3s. 4d. But the proposals had not been received with enthusiasm by the traders. 28 01 11 [1.26]

1930

1930 02 25

Sir – we Cambridge market traders notice that Councillor Longley wants to move our stalls into the Corn Exchange but we challenge him to produce a transferred market that has been a success. He wants to replace the stalls with car parking spaces. Cannot he see the utter foolishness of congesting the very centre of a town with cars. Those on Market Hill consist of business townsmen, clerics and travellers who sit in their expensive car, eat bread and cheese, beg an onion to go with it but do little business. The Market Hill and Peas Hill are open-air markets. An arcade was tried years ago. The

building stands today, a sorry sight, in St Andrew's Hill. The stallholders all failed – W.J. Cambridge.
30 02 25 [1.3]

1934

1934 12 17

Merchants at Cambridge Corn Exchange traditionally end the year by throwing about samples of their wares. The signal for the commencement of the battle was the explosion of a cracker near the door. The 'firer' was immediately bombarded and soon covered with flour, wheat and artificial manure. Crackers banged merrily, bags burst with marked effect and very soon all the dignified corn-merchants were life-like imitations of snowmen. Even the rather grim-looking statue of Jonas Webb looked comical with the flour-bag headgear that was placed on it. After 30 minutes the ammunition ran out and combat ceased, though the debris-covered floor was witness of the fight that had been in progress. 34 12 17a

1936

1936 07 30

Cattle Market needed modern facilities and expansion – 36 07 30d

1948

1948 05 07

The death occurred on Monday of Fred Markham, familiarly known as "Cuthbert". He will be missed by many stallholders in Cambridge Market Place where from early morning till evening he could be seen, either pushing his barrow or at times helping to hold down stalls in squally weather. Farmers, cattle dealers, auctioneers too, will miss him both at the Cattle Market in Cambridge and throughout East Anglia. "A very sociable man and a good mixer" would describe his personality. He was an ex-cavalry man, and had much foreign service to his credit. He was 56 48 05 07

1950

1950 01 13

Cambridge's chief sanitary inspector says the stalls on Market Square are unnecessary. "We don't like these open-air stalls at all, and I don't see that in 1950 we need them at all. I think it is an anachronism". Questioned about dogs that 'wet and sniff all over the place' he said he had spoken to stallholders and asked if they did not realise that people had to eat vegetable which had been fouled by dogs 50 01 13

1951

1951 06 20

Cambridge councillors heard that the cattle market has become one of the most important cattle centres in the country as a result of the great increase in the amount of business transacted since the war. Problems had arisen because of the serious congestion of traffic in Hills Road when large sales are held and the need for better facilities for traders and customers. It was not designed for holding large sales of agricultural machines nor for the provision of parking accommodation for upwards of 1,200 motor vehicles

1952

1952 10 31

Within the last 60 years Cambridge Cattle Market, once one of the smallest in the country, has become one of the largest. When the Mayor opens the latest addition – the new store cattle sale yard with its covered-in accommodation for about 500 people and penning facilities for upwards of 1,000 head of cattle – it will mark the beginning of a new era in which the Cattle Market may well become a national centre for livestock sales. The present market was opened in 1885 and until 1912 was small; by 1939 it was handling 200-300 fat cattle, 1,000 sheep and 500 pigs a week.

1952 11 04

The Mayor of Cambridge auctioned ten first-cross blue and white store pigs for the good price of £7 5s. He was opening the new sales yard at Cambridge Cattle Market. They were 12 months overdue due to difficulty in getting steel because of the Government's re-armament policy but were part of the council's plans to make it one of the best in the country. "We hope these extensions will make producers send more cattle and livestock and thus attract buyers from all over the country", he said. They were awaiting Government policy on the question of an abattoir and there was a move to start a wool market.

1955

1955 04 26

At the last two sales of machinery at Cambridge Cattle Market there has been considerable congestion in all the main roads and residents complained that nearly 600 cars had been parked in the streets in addition to more than 1,000 in the market car parks. The City Surveyor suggested demolishing loose boxes and a Nissen hut to provide 250 more spaces. The machinery sales were probably the largest in the world attracting buyers from overseas. About 250 tractors were refused for sale owing to the lack of space. 55 04 26

1959

1959

David moves his Saturday stall from Peas Hill to Market Place, most of others went some time before War [2.3]

1960s The Cambridgeshire Collection has detailed newspaper cuttings files from this date

1960

1960 12 03

Market stall holders are among Cambridge's most colourful characters. Many have taken over the stalls from their fathers or grandfathers, often reaching back five or six generations. There are a handful of names which provide the nucleus of the traders – Whitehead, David, Sharp, Reynolds, Simpkins and several others. Charles Whitehead has stood at his greengrocery stall since he was 14, Messrs Miller and Beresford are in charge of the pets stall and Mrs Sharp has been selling old silver and brasses for 52 years. They believe that as long as they are straight and fair in their dealings, competition cannot harm them – 60 12 30b

1961

1961 07 12

A new car park attendant's hut has been installed on Cambridge Market Square. The original hut was badly damaged by fire during the Guy Fawkes celebrations two years ago and replaced by a temporary one. It is expected to be in use later this week 61 07 12

1961 11 23

Claude Kirkup became manager of Cambridge cattle market in 1936 and has seen tremendous changes. He can remember the days when sheep and pigs were brought to the market in tumbrel carts or by horse and cart. With the advent of motor traffic the market increased ten-fold and animals now come from a very wide radius. Many Continental buyers attend the Monday agricultural machinery sales. 61 11 23

1962

1962 12 22

King Street poultry & produce mart to close after nearly 50 years due to rent increase [3.17]

1964

1964 01 24

At 84, Harry Capon is the oldest stallholder on the Cambridge market. He sells the same type of fancy goods as when he first set up the stall at 16. "Every Monday and Saturday I get up at 5.30 and load up

the trolley with the goods and pull it from my house in Coronation Street. I set the stuff out on the stall then it's sell, sell, sell until 6pm when I start to pack up. Again another hour or so to load the trolley and then back home to bed about 9 pm. Two days a week I go up the London and the warehouses; I often get a lift with a fruitier and he leaves me at Hyde Park Corner on the way to Covent Garden", he says., adding "The market is slowly dying ... fewer people and fewer stalls" 64
01 24

1964 07 01

Produce market now open Cattle Market, for nearly year without market after King St closed [3.18]

1965

1965 03 27

The new corn market building on the Cattle Market site will replace the old Saturday corn market held in the Corn Exchange. Merchants have been advocating a move for 10 years and now it is hoped the market will revive. An encouraging number of people want to take stalls. The cost of desk or box in the new building is £10 a year. People who attend to buy or sell are charged £3 for an annual ticket. Visitors are admitted free. It will also provide a small new hall for the Cherry Hinton Road – Hills Road district 65 03 27a

1965 04 05

New £8,000 corn market opened Cattle Market, marks end of trading in Corn Exchange

1965 09 16

Fruit and vegetables for Cambridge brought from London markets by Whitehead and Pordage – feature – 65 09 16a

1967

1967 01 31

Tubular stalls proposed for Market which removable for weekend car parking [4.4]

1967 02 02

Plans to move Cattle Market to Milton Road [4.2]

1967 11 02

Trading at Cambridge Corn Market on the Cattle Market site has sunk almost to zero and the specially designed £8,000 hall launched two years ago is tottering towards its doom. Council was under legal obligation to provide a new corn market once they decided the old one was not viable. 47 merchants said they wanted a stand, it opened with 32 but this has dwindled to 22; on Mondays it is often empty – 68 11 02

1968

1968 01 11

Cambridge Cattle Market flourishing but farmers find Bury more convenient – 68 01 11a

1969

1969 04 15

Horse sales revived after 15 years [4.5]

1969 09 20

Proposal to cut Market Place in half five days for car parking, in October 43 cars parked when under new scheme would be space for 36;

1969 09 24

Market holders' discontent over plans for Market Square – 69 09 24, plans delayed – 69 09 25;

1969 10 01

Plans outlined – 69 10 01, 01a

1969 10 02

6000 petition, plans delayed

1969 10 21

Experimental parking ban with every stall occupied 6 days a week - at present only half occupied Monday-Friday; new stalls introduced [4.5]

1972

1972 11 02

Sunday market plans rejected [4.6]

1972 12 08

An estimated 2,000 people turned up for the first day's trading at the Marcade, Cambridge's first indoor market. The Marcade is the brainchild of two city businessmen, one of whom said "We have spoken to every trader today and most of them have said they have taken as much in five hours today as they usually take in a week" There are 48 stands in the market, which is in the old Eastern Electricity buildings in East Road and they hope to have a total of 100 by January. "The whole idea is to make it a good market where someone can buy anything at competitive prices and of good quality". They were aiming at a market where a customer could buy everything from a kitchen sink to a fur coat, said Mr Smith 72 12 08

1973

1973 11 22

It was the Second World War which boosted the trade in used agricultural machinery at Cambridge cattle market. Now, after 30 years on the Hills Road site, it is hoped that the move to the new sales area down Milton Road will give a similar fillip to what is generally regarded as one of Europe's outstanding second-hand implements market. The cattle market developed over the years and continued unchanged until 1966 when the advent of an £8,000 new corn market proved more or less a flop from the start and received negligible support from farmers and auctioneers. There have been frequent prophecies that the cattle market will eventually go the same way. Obstinate though, it refuses to die 73 11 22

1974

1974 04 16

Traditional Easter Monday market, Cattle Market [4.9]

1975

1975 02 18

New machinery market opened Cowley Road [4.5]

1976

1976 12 16

With move of implements is fall off at Cattle Market which also hit by swine vesicular disease, closure recommended as costs £11,000 subsidies per year [5.1,4.6]

1977

1977 01 14

The Cambridge cattle market, which has stood at Cherryhinton Road for almost 100 years, should be closed on its present site as soon as possible, the city council decided, because the ratepayers receive no benefit from the thousands of pounds spent on subsidising it each year. It is the only sizeable market in the whole of the county and played an important part in the city's life. Its closure did not exclude the possibility of its re-opening elsewhere. In the meantime the market should be

accommodated on a smaller part of the site, thus releasing an amount of valuable land for industrial development. 77 01 14

1978

1978 02 02

Sunday market proposals vetoed on Market Hill & Cattle Market [5.2]

1979

1979 02 15

Cattle Market to be laid out for industry [5.3]

1980

1980 06 20

Sunday Market City Football club starts May, closed June [5.4]

1980 06 26

Four people were taken to hospital after a car careered across a corner of Cambridge Market Square. It ploughed across the Barclays Bank edge of the market, striking a flower stall, scattering fruit and vegetables and hitting two shoppers before ending up four feet from the railings of Gt St Mary's church. A Girton lady working on the flower stall said: "I just saw the car out of the corner of my eye and ran for it. The stall just folded up with its legs in the air" 80 06 26

1981

1981 10 15

City Football Club Thursday market starts, moves Cowley Rd 1984 [5.5]

1981 11 05

Beaumont centre - indoor market, gutted 6 years ago & reopened after £100,000 facelift to be demolished [5.6]

1982

1982 02 03

Andy Gray decided 13 years ago to move his collection of 500 second-hand singles from Bury market to serve the more discerning musical tastes of Cambridge. He can still be found in the market square today, though now he has eight shops in the region. He puts his success down to undercutting the traditional record retailers as well as offering the obscure stuff you just couldn't buy elsewhere. Rather like John Peel he has kept abreast of changes, opening 'The Beat Goes On' to cater for new trends. 82 02 03b

1982 03 02

Sunday market plans Cowley Road scrapped after months waiting [5.7]

1982 07 19

Work is continuing on the Clifton industrial estate, a joint development between the City Council and Dencora Securities on the site of the former of cattle market. There will be 31 units providing 225 jobs in light industry and warehousing with the first opening shortly. Much emphasis is being placed on a good quality of construction and landscaping to ensure a good working environment. 82 07 19

1984 09 05

Cambridge City Football Club's expanding Thursday market moved to its new base in Cowley Road. Started as part of the club's solvency drive it has developed to become a popular city attraction that has survived the sale of its old site – part of the club's ground in Milton Road. The 70 market traders are hoping to take their regular big crowd to the new site. There will be special buses run by the club from various points in the city. Since it began three years the quality of merchandise has steadily improved. 84 09 05

1982 10 04

Market announces worst months trading for 30 years due to parking problems [5.8]

1985

1985 01 23

Hundreds of farmers and traders flocked to Milton Road sale ground for the biggest traction auction in the country. Yilmaz Alademir had come all the way from Farmagusta, Cyprus looking for a tractor he could ship home as they were much cheaper in England. A more typical buyer was Gavin Hamilton of Manor Farm, Great Chesterford. He was looking for wheels and rollers among the dozens of machines and implements at the back of the saleground. The sale was started in the early 1940s by Mr Henry Grain & Cambridge auctioneers Cheffins, Grain and Chalk have been pulling the crowds ever since
85 01 23b

1985 09 27

Cambridge Cattle Market opened 100 years ago. Before 1885 it was held at Castle End but the stalls were inadequate for the number of beasts. Then Jesus College provided land near the railway station. Cattle docks from all four railways were within two minutes' walk and there were direct railway links to Scotland and Ireland. There are still weekly sales of stock, with horse sales every five weeks, but the area nearby that was used for grazing is now the Clifton Industrial Estate. It is filled with large corrugated boxes housing a wide variety of light industry and a 'Park and Ride' site 85 09 27

1987

1987 01 08

Traders are blaming Cambridge's parking problems for turning the market into a 'morgue' and 'cutting trade by up to 50 per cent'. They say shoppers are going elsewhere and the centre is dying simply because there is nowhere to park. There are too few car parks, too high parking fees, a loss of meter spaces and cuts in bus services. A Consultant's report commissioned by leading retailers and hotel bosses has also said that poor parking facilities are costing shops lost trade and a pressure group has called for a 1,000-space underground car park 87 01 08a

1987 03 26

Chirpy market trader Bill Gray has gone to extreme lengths to keep his customers happy. He even skinned a rabbit for one person who stopped to buy some fruit and veg. His beaming smile and friendly small-talk has been a big boost for business. And the smile does not fade when the rain lashes down. Bill, of Gt Shelford, has been a familiar face during the past 31 years. But now he is calling it a day and will hand the business over to his son and daughter-in-law. But his regulars – who include the wife of the former Master of Trinity - will be pleased to know that he will still help out sometimes. 87 03 36

1988

1988 07 21

The future of Cambridge market could be in doubt due to parking problems, stallholders say. Until 1969 drivers could park their cars in the middle of the market area – an attendant collected the fees – while stallholders occupied all the outside area. Then the council came up with a proposal that the area be divided into two – half stalls, half cars. But this provoked indignation and all parking was banned with new metal-framed plastic-covered stalls instead of wood and canvas set out over whole area. – 88 07 21

1990

1990 08 15

Market traders put forward plan to pedestrianise the square with a quarter left free for stalls – 90 08 15a

1990 09 26

Market Hill revamp plans include new fountain – 90 09 26a